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SCUBA Clinic Makes Its Debut at NSAB



Photos by Ryan Hunter

Wounded, ill and injured service members familiarize themselves with the equipment provided free of charge.

By Ryan Hunter
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

The Introduction to SCUBA clinic was held for the first time at Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB).

For many of the service members in attendance, it would be their first time diving underwater, but for all of them it was completely free of charge.

The clinic, held on Sept. 16, was sponsored and run by a non-profit organization that works with wounded warriors across the country. The short, two hour course lets service members get their "feet wet" with the basics of SCUBA.

"We give them enough of a briefing to keep them safe and comfortable underwater," said (retired) Capt. and Executive Director for the non-profit organization, Jeffrey Currer. "We get them in their gear and take them on a fun dive in the pool. We let them swim around, throw toy

torpedoes and feel what it's like to be weightless. It's just a fantastic experience."

The organization has worked with wounded, ill or injured service members, with a variety of both mental and physical disabilities, who have benefited tremendously from participating in the program.

"The reason why we're doing this is the therapeutic value," said Currer. "We have a young lady, who we're still working with right now. Anxiety is her primary issue and [her doctors] were worried about her panicking under water, so we worked with them and got her through a snorkeling session. She did great and wanted to do more, so we went back to the doctor and they approved. Just this weekend, she completed her confined water training and she's ready to move to her open water training."

"We have not cured her condition. She's just given herself confidence



Dive instructor, Mike Wright, prepares student service members for their first dive in the Building 17 swimming pool.

and we've facilitated it. I'm sure she'll always be fighting these anxieties, but now she's got more tools to make herself a more functioning, contributing member of society and she feels much better about herself because of that."

At NSAB, participants in the clinic emerged from the pool after being submerged for nearly 30 minutes and seemed enthusiastic to continue. Col. Floyd Burgher described the course as "Challenging and fun," while Staff Sgt. Jona-

than Earley exclaimed "I definitely want to get certified."

Service members with physical disabilities are encouraged to enroll in the free Soldiers Undergoing Disabilities SCUBA program. "They work primarily with the amputee section," said Currer. "We can handle [amputee divers], but they do a great job over there."

Those who are interested in learning how to SCUBA dive, but don't qualify for the free diving course are eligible

for a number of alternatives available at NSAB. For non-injured active duty service members, dependents, retired military reservists, contractors as well as Department of Defense and National Institute of Health employees, Bryan Jackson, the fitness and aquatics manager for Morale Welfare and Recreation, is holding a SCUBA diving class starting Oct 8. The classes are not free, but will include the same training and open water certification.

In response to questions about future clinics specific to wounded warriors at NSAB, Bryan said, "I have no doubt this will be something we want to continue."

The next Introduction to SCUBA clinic will be held Nov. 21. To register, contact NSAB Adaptive Sports program coordinator Amanda Kelley, at 301-400-2521.

For any of the other above-mentioned programs contact Jackson at 301-295-0031.

Obama Lauds DOD Workforce, Encourages Budget Resolution

By Army Sgt. 1st Class
Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
American Forces Press Service

President Barack Obama thanked the Defense Department workforce in a message Oct. 1, and expressed his disappointment in Congress' failure to approve a budget, resulting in a government shutdown.

"As president, and as your commander-in-chief, I've worked to make sure you have the strategy, the resources and the support you need to complete the missions our nation asks of you," he said.

"And every time you've met your responsibilities and performed with extraordinary professionalism, skill and courage," Obama said.

Unfortunately, the president said, Congress has not fulfilled its responsibility and failed to pass a budget.

"As a result, much of our government must now shut down until Congress funds it again," Obama said.

Obama noted Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other commanders would provide more information on how the shutdown will affect the DOD civilians and their families.

"Today, I want to speak directly to you about how what happens next," he said. "Those of you in uniform will remain in your normal duty status. The threats to our national security have not changed, and we need you to be ready for any contingency."

"Ongoing military operations, like our efforts in Afghanistan, will continue," Obama said. "If you're serving in harm's way, we're going to make sure you have what you need to succeed in your missions."

The president said Congress has passed, and he would sign into law, legislation ensuring those personnel receive their paychecks on time.

"We'll continue to work to address any impact this shut down has on you and your families," Obama said.

"To all our DOD civilians, I know the days ahead could mean more uncertainty, including possible furloughs," he said. "And I know this comes on top of the furloughs that many of you already endured this summer."

"Your talents and dedication help keep our military the best in the world," he said. "That's why I'll keep working to get Congress to re-open our government and get you back to work as soon as possible."

Obama said the shutdown is occurring against the background of broader changes.

"But here's what I want you to know. I'm going to keep fighting to get rid of those across-the-board budget cuts – the sequester – which are hurting our military and our economy."

We need a responsible approach, Obama said, that deals with our fiscal challenges and keeps our military and our economy strong.

"I'm going to make sure you stay the greatest military in the world – bar none," he added. "That's what I'm fighting for. That's what you and your families deserve."

The president thanked the Defense Department for their commitment to protecting the nation.

"On behalf of the American people, thank you for your service which keeps us free," Obama said. "And thank you for your sacrifice which keeps our nation and our military the greatest force for freedom that the world has ever known."

Bethesda Notebook

Flu Shots Available

Staff and beneficiaries at Walter Reed Bethesda can receive the flu vaccine now through Oct. 25 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday in Building 9, first floor near Radiology. You must bring your military ID, staff badge or Common Access Card (CAC). For more information, call Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Immunizations at 301-295-5798.

Healing Arts Exhibit

The Healing Arts Exhibit opens at Walter Reed Bethesda today during a reception from 3 to 7 p.m. in the pavilion between the America Garage and Building 19. For more information, contact Seema Reza at seema.reza@med.navy.mil, or Cmdr. Moira McGuire at Moira.McGuire@med.navy.mil.

Prostate Cancer Support Group

The WRNMMC Prostate Cancer Support Group meets the third Thursday of every month. There are two sessions, both on Thursday, Oct. 17 in the River Conference Room, third floor of the America Building (Building 19) adjacent to the Center for Prostate Disease Research. The day session is from 1 to 2 p.m., and the evening session is from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact retired Col. Jane Hudak at 301-319-2918 or jane.l.hudak.ctr@health.mil.

Ask Your Leadership

'Ask Your Leadership' is a staff communication tool for you to view and post questions or comments for official responses from the Walter Reed Bethesda (WRB) command leadership. The tool can be found on the WRB Intranet page. Click on the Town Hall/Leadership Forum icon, then click on 'Ask Your Leadership'.

Free Financial Counseling

Free financial coaching for all service members, federal employees, contractors and family members is available at the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) in Building 11. Assistance is available to analyze your credit report or credit scores, discuss retirement (Thrift Savings Plan) options, and create a budget. To schedule an appointment, or for more information, call 301-319-4087, or email ffsc@med.navy.mil.

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National Museum of Health and Medicine Supports Art Exhibit

Melissa Brachfeld
National Museum of Health and Medicine

The National Museum of Health and Medicine (NMHM) is proud to partner with the University of Maryland's Health Sciences and Human Services Library (HS/HSL) for the installation of a series of larger-than-life portraits by artist Eliette Markhbein, which honors survivors of traumatic brain injuries (TBI), in HS/HSL's Weise Gallery.

The exhibition entitled "WHACK'ed ... and then everything was different," opened at HS/HSL, located in Baltimore, Md., in August. NMHM staff installed the portraits with support from library personnel. The exhibit at the library is on display until Oct. 8.

Small-scale reproductions of the portraits featured in WHACK'ed were installed in NMHM's lobby in March 2013, and were on display through Sept. 30, 2013. In recognition of the concurrent exhibits, NMHM's Sept. 24 Medical Museum Science Café program featured Markhbein, who shared the story behind her portrait series.

Markhbein, who is a TBI survivor herself, constructed the portrait series to raise awareness of TBIs. Her subjects include former congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, professional athlete Troy Aikman, renowned actor George Clooney, news correspondent Bob Woodruff and service member Claudia Carreon who was injured in Iraq.

Others featured in

the exhibit include National Hockey League Hall of Famer Pat Lafontaine; Alexis Verzal, a spirited 5-year-old who was shaken at 14 months; Trisha Meili, the "Central Park Jogger," brain injury patient Timothy Pruce; and musician Keith Richards.

Markhbein's unique technique is a silent testimony to the three phases of TBI: fractured, reassembled and whole. Referencing cropped photographs, Markhbein first draws the portrait in charcoal on paper. She then imperfectly cuts the drawing into squares and reassembles them as portraits on painted canvas. The uneven-grid effect that results from the drawing/cutting/collage technique illustrates how TBI disrupts sensory and perceptual processes. The grid also acts as a metaphor for the support and structure that TBI survivors require to live an active and rewarding life. Each portrait represents 150-200 hours of work, and it took three years to complete the series.

"By representing faces of TBI survivors on a large scale, I hope to elicit emotional intimacy and universality," says Markhbein. "More importantly, I wanted to show examples of brain injury survivors who moved on to have full, productive lives. I hope the portraits offer inspiration to those recently injured. Kinship and identity with such icons is a powerful emotion, encompassing pride, pleasure and self-compassion, all of which are in short supply during the rehabilitation process."



National Museum of Health and Medicine/Released

Gwen Nemes (left), tour program coordinator at the National Museum of Health and Medicine (NMHM); **Helaina Blume (center),** NMHM exhibits specialist; and **Steve Hill,** NMHM exhibits manager, assist in the installation of "WHACK'ed ... and then everything was different" at the University of Maryland's Health Sciences and Human Services Library in Baltimore, Md.

TBI is not an unfamiliar topic to the NMHM or to the Department Of Defense, which has a demonstrated commitment to preventing and treating traumatic brain injuries. NMHM is home to one of the world's most comprehensive brain collections.

NMHM is located at 2500 Linden Lane in Silver Spring, Md., and is open 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day except Dec. 25. Admission is free. For more information, call 301-319-3300 or visit www.medical-museum.mil. For more information about the HS/HSL at the University of Maryland, visit www.hshsl.umaryland.edu/.

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Preventing Suicide Is Everyone's Responsibility

By Cat DeBinder
WRNMMC Journal staff writer

The Department Of Defense's (DOD) top health official and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) staff are urging the military community to stand together to prevent suicides.

"Suicides have increased in recent years around the world, in the United States, and among our armed forces," stated Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for Health Affairs and director of the TRICARE Management Activity, in an announcement on Sept. 27.

"More than one million people worldwide died from suicide last year — more than those killed by homicides and war combined, according to The International Association for Suicide Prevention and the World Health Organization," Woodson continued. "More than 34,000 Americans took their own lives last year, surpassing the number who died in vehicle accidents, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). While attention to suicides has focused on young people, the rate of those between the ages of 35 and 64 who killed themselves grew by 30 percent between 1999 and 2010, the CDC reported."

"Our service members are not immune," Woodson stated. "While the suicide rate has traditionally been lower for the military ranks than for civilians, that trend has begun to reverse. The number of suicides among our 1.4 million active-duty troops remains relatively low by comparison, at 350 last year. Still, the number has more than

doubled since 2001 and even one is too many."

According to the CDC, the causes of suicide are complex, but the goal of suicide prevention is to "reduce factors that increase risk and increase factors that promote resilience or coping."

"Suicide attempts are usually related to problems with close relationships such as marriage or family issues, but they are also caused by problems with work, finances and the law," said Larry Grubb, staff psychiatrist at WRNMMC.

The National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) says that "suicide does not discriminate." People of all genders, ages, and ethnicities are at risk for suicide, but people most at risk share certain characteristics such as:

- depression or other mental disorder, or substance abuse disorder
- a prior suicide attempt
- being bullied
- family history of a mental disorder, substance abuse or suicide
- family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- having guns or other firearms in the home
- incarceration, being in prison or jail
- being exposed to others' suicidal behavior, family members, peers, or media figures

"We also know that financial and relationship problems play a role," Woodson stated. "Among our service members, we know that half of those who died by suicide in recent years never served in Iraq or Afghanistan. But we also know that war trauma weighs heavily on those who did."



U.S. Army photo by Stephen Baker

He said stress is a part of life, and as stress builds, some people start to feel hopeless, helpless and so desperate that there just doesn't appear to be any way out.

"Suicide may also be an act of anger in that they say, 'they will miss me when I'm gone' or 'I'll show them,'" said Grubb.

He added there are some warning signs of someone who may be contemplating suicide such as:

- talking about suicide or writing a suicide note
- looking for ways to die
- making statements about being hopeless, helpless or worthless
- showing a preoccupation with death
- changes in physical appearance with decreased concern about appearance (weight loss or weight gain)

See **SUICIDE** page 10



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Fisher House Bethesda Provides a Home Away From Home for Military Families

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Nathan Parde NSAB Public Affairs staff writer

The five Fisher Houses located on the grounds of Naval Support Activity Bethesda play an integral role in the healing process of many wounded, ill and injured service members and their families.

"The Fisher Houses are a home away from home for military family members, whether they are active duty or retired," said Fisher House Manager Ken Merritt. "It provides a community style of living for family members who have loved ones in the hospitals or medical centers so they don't have to worry about the burden of finding and financing a place to stay. One of the mottos for the foundation is 'Family Love is Good Medicine too.'"

The Navy and Marine Corps Fisher Houses are built on the grounds of

military and Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals by the Fisher House Foundation which was founded by Zachary Fisher and his wife, Elizabeth.

"Mr. Zachary Fisher was an incredible human being and philanthropist," said Merritt. "He's someone who wanted to join the military in the World War II timeframe, but was found unfit for duty due to a leg injury that he sustained in his earlier years as a construction worker."

"This didn't stop his determination. He continued his life in the construction industry, but always made a point to visit military installations and military hospitals where he could see the needs of family members."

A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Fisher began working in construction when he was 16 years old and, along with his brothers, formed Fisher Brothers. The company grew to be one of the premier resi-



Fisher House photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Nathan Parde

dential and commercial developers in the real estate industry.

In their later years, the Fishers dedicated more than \$20 million to the construction of comfort homes for families of hospitalized military personnel.

"Today, the Fisher House Foundation has many homes across the country and worldwide in locations such as Germany, Alaska, Hawaii and all throughout the States on military and VA installations," said Merritt. "With our newest house being dedicated this month, we are now up to 61 houses total.

Bethesda has the great distinction of having the very first Fisher House (and therefore also the first) on a Department of Defense installation."

Fisher House 1 is originally an eight-bedroom house, but later the design for future homes was changed to a 20-bedroom home in order to meet an increased need, said Merritt. Combined with the other four Fisher Houses at Bethesda, this represents the largest Fisher House complex on a military base today, said Merritt.

In his later years, Zachary Fisher received many awards and recog-



nitions for his contributions to the military and other charitable causes, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom and other top awards that a civilian can receive from each branch of the military.

"One of the highest recognitions that Mr. Fisher received was the presidential civilian medal and he was made an honorary veteran of the Armed Forces, with full rights and privileges because of all that he has done for the military," said Merritt. "Bob Hope is the only other individ-

ual who has been given this honor."

Today, his nephew, Kenneth Fisher, continues the family legacy as Chairman of the Fisher House Foundation by running the business and continuing to expand the family's vision and dream, said Merritt.

Here at Bethesda, the five Fisher Houses allow for 73 families to be hosted at once. Since they were built, these houses have made a difference in the lives of approximately 7,550 families,

See HOME page 9



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Faces of Survival:

Prostate Cancer Does Not Discriminate

By Sharon Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Journal staff writer

There is a wide spectrum of patients with prostate cancer — varying in age, race, family history and treatment choices. Four Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) patients shared their experience with the disease. They spoke of faith, regret, knowledge and hope.

Navy Cmdr. Matt Rising, 47, diagnosed June 2012.

Men who have a family history of developing prostate cancer are more likely to develop prostate cancer than other men, according to the Center for Prostate Disease Research (CPDR) at WRNMMC. Cmdr. Matt Rising's dad was diagnosed seven years ago at the age of 70. As a Navy pilot, Rising said prostate specific antigen (PSA) tests were taken for his annual flight physical. Blood tests revealed he had an elevated PSA. Rising was 46 years old when he was diagnosed.

After an initial biopsy, Rising planned to do active surveillance of the disease to watch and see what happened, but a second biopsy indicated more cancer — more aggressive than originally thought — which moved him from low to intermediate risk.

Rising educated himself on his options and decided on surgery. Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Inger Rosner, a urologic oncologist who serves as associate director of the CPDR, removed his prostate using robotic surgery in March. Rising said his prognosis looks good.

"It's been pretty much transparent to me; I had the surgery six months ago," Rising said. "Dr. Rosner did a great job."

"The discussion about whether PSAs are valuable or not — they worked for me. They were the only indication that I had any kind of a problem," Rising said.

Retired Air Force Col. Rick Atchison, 73, diagnosed 2011.

According to a CPDR fact sheet, prostate cancer can occur in men of all ages, but it occurs more frequently in men over 50, and is most common in men over 65. Retired Air Force Col. Rick Atchison was 71 when he was diagnosed.

Atchison had monitored his PSA level since 2004. With an elevated PSA in June 2011, he returned to WRNMMC later that August, but elected to forego a biopsy until October, when he was rushed from a camping trip to a Fort Belvoir, Va., clinic at 3 a.m., in pain. Biopsies



Photos by Sharon Renee Taylor

**Retired Air Force Col.
Rick Atchison**



**Retired Air Force Lt. Col.
Skip Coburn**

revealed a very aggressive form of prostate cancer had moved outside the prostate. He had radiation therapy to malignant lymph nodes near his aorta. He remains on hormone therapy; his PSA has dropped dramatically as a result, said Atchison, who explained the CPDR at WRNMMC has been a godsend.

"Looking back, I didn't act fast enough," he said. "I would've saved myself a lot of grief."

He recommends men to get screened and follow their PSAs. "Avoid letting it go," Atchison said. "If you're diagnosed with it, you really need to do your research."

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Skip Coburn, 69, diagnosed 2009.

In most cases, men with early prostate cancer have no symptoms — like retired Air Force Lt. Col. Skip



**Retired Air Force Master Sgt.
James Bohannon**



**Navy Cmdr.
Matt Rising**

Coburn, diagnosed with prostate cancer at age 65 after an elevated PSA and subsequent biopsy. "I never experienced any pain in any of this," said the pilot who stays active with swimming, hiking and scuba diving. "Don't be afraid of getting a biopsy," he tells men.

He went through the CPDR education program and enrolled in several prostate cancer studies. After a third biopsy revealed a low percentage of non-aggressive cancer, Coburn decided to "watch and wait." He said PSA tests every 90 days keep him and his doctors advised on his progress. His tests continue to be within the normal range.

Coburn has a close relative who was diagnosed with prostate cancer and opted for a radical prostatectomy. He urges men diagnosed with

prostate cancer considering treatment options to learn about the disease, and "make this decision for yourself."

"I'm never quite sure if I made the right decision, but I'm comfortable in the choice that I've made," Coburn said.

Retired Air Force Master Sgt. James Bohannon, 56, diagnosed 2010.

African-American men have an increased risk of developing prostate cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. In fact, African-American men have the highest rate of prostate cancer. Retired Air Force Master Sgt. James Bohannon was 53 when he was diagnosed with the disease at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) July 2010.

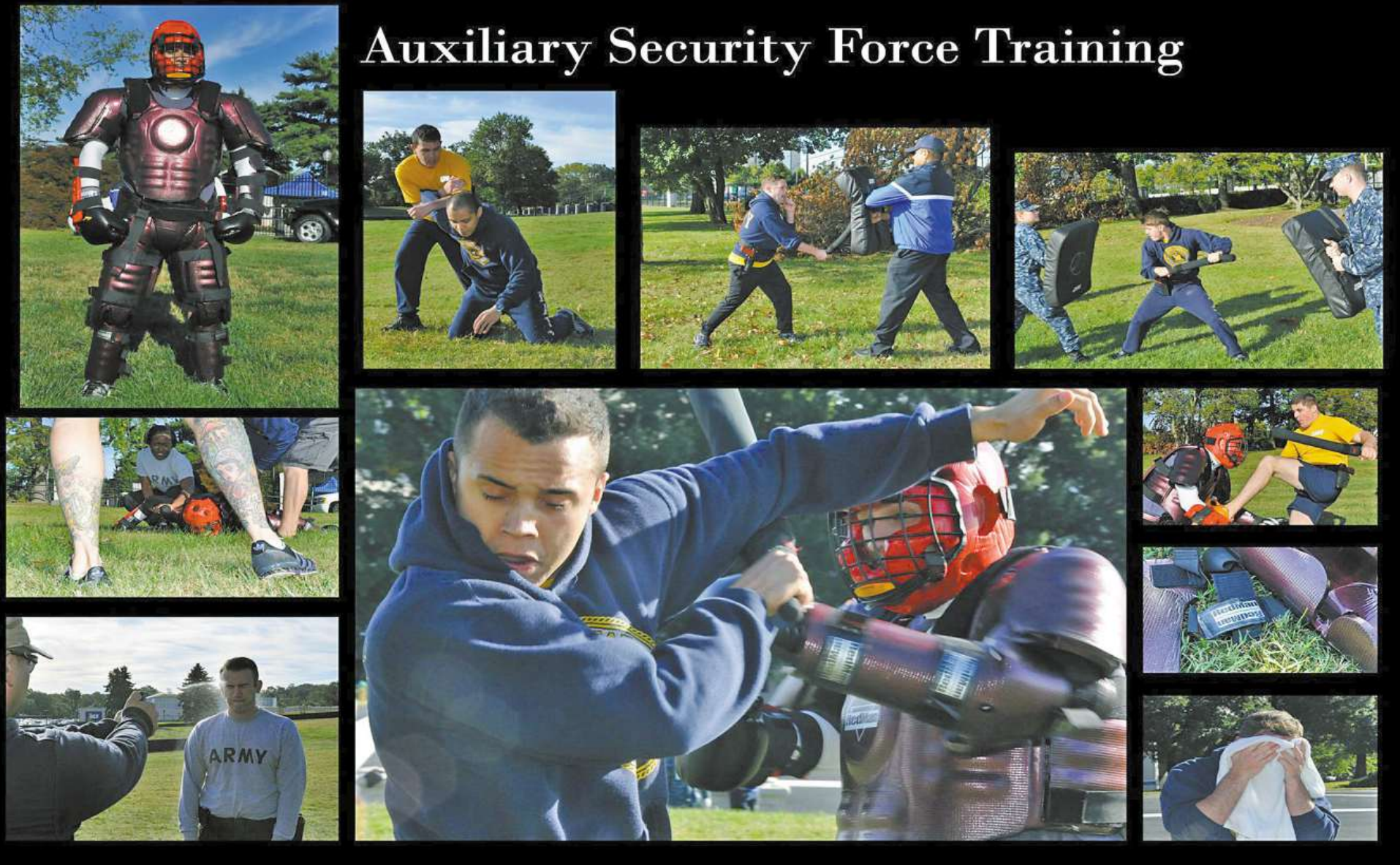
A year earlier at Malcolm Grow Medical Center (Joint Base Andrews, Md.), during a routine exam for his diabetes, a PSA test was taken. He was referred to WRAMC after a second test showed his PSA elevating. A biopsy confirmed cancer and met with a multidisciplinary team at CPDR including urologic oncologists, radiologists, patient educators and a psychologist.

Given his physical health and his stage 1 cancer diagnosis, Bohannon said he was a candidate for all treatment options: surgery, radiation, hormone or expectorant. He received a radical prostatectomy using robotic technology January of 2011 at WRAMC, and returned to work the following month.

His pathology report indicated 12 tumors in his prostate. The cancer was just short of spreading beyond his prostate. "Timing of [the] decision to remove it was critical," Bohannon said. "A delay would have been dangerous and the outcome much different."

More than two years after his initial diagnosis, his PSA level does not indicate cancer, he explained. Bohannon returns to WRNMMC for follow-up exams every six months. "God is good," he said.

The CPDR offers a multi-disciplinary prostate cancer clinic that provides patients and their families with comprehensive, coordinated and individually tailored experience to discuss concerns, treatment options and recommendations, according to its director retired Army Col. (Dr.) David McLeod, a urologist for more than 30 years. Men can make an appointment to discuss their prostate health issues by calling CPDR at 301-319-2900.



Service members participate in the Auxiliary Security Force training Sept. 25.

Photo spread by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Williams-Church



NASCAR show cars and NASCAR drivers visit Naval Support Activity Bethesda Sept. 26.

Photo spread by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Williams-Church

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Obituary

Frances Olivia Reeder passed away on September 7, 2013 in Gaithersburg, MD at the age of 95. She is survived by her sister Catherine Winifred Newman, one nephew, two nieces, four great nieces, and three great great nephews. She was preceded in death by her siblings William Claude Reeder, Doris Lee Heefner, and Marshall Welch Reeder. Ms. Reeder served as a nurse in the United States Army and Walter Reed Hospital Blood Bank from 1942 to 1979. She lived at Grosvenor Place, Rockville, MD prior to moving to Asbury Methodist Village, Gaithersburg, MD. She was a member of Woodside Methodist Church. Memorial services will be in her hometown of Hustontown, PA. Contributions in her memory can be made to Wounded Warrior Project or Our Military Kids.

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Titans Visit NSAB



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Original members of the T. C. Williams High School (Alexandria, Va.) football team, the Titans and their coaches, depicted in the film, "Remember the Titans," give Army Staff Sgt. Casey Jones a T-shirt with the team pictures and autographed photographs during the team's visit to Naval Support Activity Bethesda on Sept. 27.

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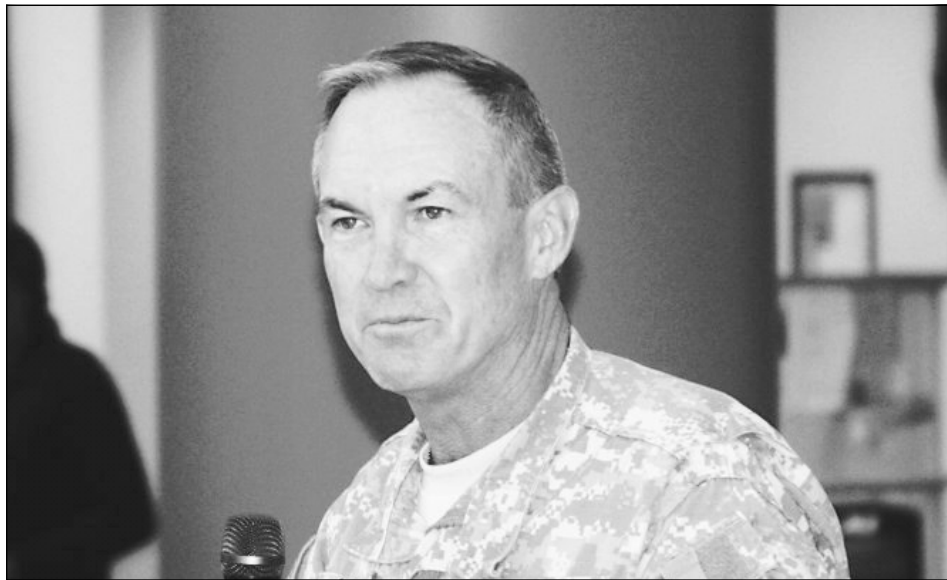
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Walter Reed Bethesda Celebrates Diversity

Hispanic Heritage Month Focuses on Serving, Leading with Pride and Honor



Photos by Bernard S. Little

Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) commander, tells those gathered for a WRNMMC Hispanic Heritage Month celebration on Sept. 26, it's important to recognize and pay tribute to the diversity at the medical center. "In our diversity there's a tremendous amount of strength," he said.

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Journal
staff writer

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with inspiring words, music, dancing and food during a program on Sept. 26 in the America Building Atrium.

This year's theme for the month-long observance is "Hispanics: Serving and Leading Our Nation with Pride and Honor."

"Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America,"

said Sgt. 1st Class Jason Zielske, equal opportunity advisor and chairman of the Bethesda Multicultural Committee at WRNMMC. "The observance started in September 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded the observance to become Hispanic Heritage Month."

The dates were chosen to observe Hispanic Heritage Month because Sept. 15 is the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, Zielske explained. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on Sept. 16, and Chile did so on Sept. 18. Also, Columbus Day, or Día de la Raza, falls within this 30-day period, on Oct. 12.

In welcoming the

Walter Reed Bethesda community to the celebration, Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark, WRNMMC commander, said, "We work together [and] we do great things together, but it's also important that we gather for events like this just to enjoy each other in fellowship."

"It's also very important we recognize [and] pay tribute to our diversity because there's a tremendous amount of strength in diversity," Clark continued. "We need to understand each other and revel in the goodness that each of us brings [to Walter Reed Bethesda]."

"Walter Reed Bethesda is a bit of a melting pot in many ways, not only of different cultures, but of Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, civilians, contractors and volunteers," Clark said. "It's important each of



1st Lt. Christopher Reyes and 1st Lt. Regine Faucher demonstrate various Latin dances during Walter Reed Bethesda's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration.

us feel good about who we are, where we came from, and that we are part of something that's bigger than ourselves and what we do, which is to serve the greatest patients in the entire world.

"I ask that you be very proud of who we are, what we do and most importantly, how we do it," the brigadier general added.

Command Master Chief Terry Prince, senior enlisted leader at WRNMMC, echoed Clark's sentiments, calling the nation's medical center, "an incredible team made up

of every nationality. We are [nearly] 7,000 people hard at work delivering outstanding medical care to our wounded warriors, family members and all other eligible beneficiaries. It's exciting to come to work every day and be part of this team."

Prince added Walter Reed Bethesda "celebrates all cultures every day, but it's important to get together and recognize the specific achievements that Hispanic Americans have given to the armed forces and the nation as a whole."

Yeoman 2nd Class

Santana Vallejo, of Mexican descent originally from Texas, explained, "Hispanics have had a profound and positive influence on our country." Contributing to this is "the strong commitment to family, faith, hard work and service." The Sailor added the 2010 U.S. census indicated 15.5 million people, or 16 percent of the population, are of Hispanic or Latino origin.

For more information about the Bethesda Multicultural Committee and its upcoming events, call Zielske at 301-400-3542.

HOME

Continued from 5

said Merritt.

James Mallonee, a Soldier who received care at Walter Reed while staying at Fisher House Bethesda, shared a part of his story.

"After I was diagnosed with leukemia while

deployed to Kandahar, I was medically evacuated to Walter Reed Bethesda in late April. Fisher House provided a place for my wife to stay while I was undergoing treatment and recovering from the bone marrow transplant. Without the Fisher House, I'm not sure we would have been able to handle it all. The Fisher House took a lot of pressure off of us. It has

been such a blessing."

The Fisher House Bethesda staff consists of a manager, assistant manager, two program support assistants and an incredible housekeeping team, said Merritt.

"All of the staff members here are people who would do this job for no pay. They just want to be able to give back to service members and their families," said Merritt,

who served in the Army for 29 years and retired (at Walter Reed Army Medical Center) as a master sergeant. "It's something that we truly believe in, and we want to give 150 percent to the families who are staying here."

To be eligible to stay at a Fisher House, there are a few requirements. A patient must be an inpatient at the time of

the family's check-in, their family must have traveled from at least 40 miles away, the patient's condition must be serious in nature, and they must request that their family be by their side, said Merritt. They can put in a referral through their social worker. If the Fisher House has room available, they can then bring them in to stay as long as they

need, he added.

For more information about the houses, please contact the Fisher House Bethesda directly. Anyone interested in supporting the Fisher Houses by volunteering can contact the Red Cross at Walter Reed Bethesda.

"Everyone I talk to can't say enough about what the Fisher House has done for them," said Merritt.

SUICIDE

Continued from 4

- increased use of alcohol or drugs
- appearing suddenly happier, calmer or having a change in personality
- making arrangements, setting affairs in order, giving away prized possessions
- previous suicide attempts or efforts to hurt themselves

Grubb said there are ways that people can help if they suspect someone is thinking about taking their life:

- learn to recognize the warning signals
- be ready to express your concern and support
- take every suicide threat, comment or action seriously, even if it's followed with "I'm only kidding"

Walter Reed Bethesda has a number of programs in place to assist those in need. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is offered to staff members and providers. For more information on ASIST, call the Chaplain's Office at 301-295-1510.

The Resiliency and Psychological Health Service Teams at Walter Reed Bethesda (301-400-1974) are also readily available to offer support and direction.

"One of the most important things we can do is to promote [DoD's] Military Crisis Line. If you or a loved one is experiencing a crisis, do not hesitate to call 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), and press 1 to speak to a trained counselor," Woodson added. "Put the number in your cell phone. Share it through social networking. A caring professional is there to listen 24/7."

Miss USA and Miss Maryland visit Navy Exchange



Photo by Ryan Hunter

Miss USA and Miss Maryland pose with service members during a visit to the Navy Exchange Saturday.



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